

Tea party extremists bullied the Speaker into holding yet another vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act and roll back benefits for tens of millions of Americans.

This is what the Speaker said last week:

We've got 70 new Members who have not had an opportunity to vote on the President's health care law. . . . Frankly, they've been asking for an opportunity to vote on it.

This political kabuki has tied up the floor of the House of Representatives for weeks and cost the American taxpayers \$52.4 million and counting. These are figures compiled by CBS News of the time wasted on those 37 votes—all the House staff and all other personnel who have responsibilities for making sure that place runs as well as it does. That money—\$52.4 million—is enough to restore funding for 19 million meals for homebound seniors or 6,900 children dropped from the Head Start Program.

But while the vote may be political theater, it does have one benefit: The American people will know where the freshman class of House Republicans stands. I think we know, but we will get another opportunity to see this. Do they stand with millions of Americans who are already benefiting from ObamaCare—we know that answer—or do they stand with insurance companies? We know that answer.

The insurance companies would like nothing better than to have things the way they used to be and to once again deny coverage to sick children, impose lifetime caps on care, and discriminate against those with preexisting conditions. Since President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law, insurance companies can no longer put profits ahead of people.

One of the provisions in this bill says that, of premiums paid to insurance companies for health care, 80 percent of those premiums must go to patients. No longer, as once happened, will 50 percent of the premiums go for salaries and bonuses and other perks for insurance executives—no longer. Insurance companies can no longer discriminate against children with preexisting conditions. They can no longer raise rates for no reason. They can no longer drop coverage if someone gets sick. But that is what happened. Yet this week, for the 37th time, House Republicans will try to change all that.

Here are a few of the other benefits already in effect that House Republicans would eliminate. In Nevada alone—and we are not a heavily populated State such as Massachusetts or California or New York, but we are getting bigger, we have about 3 million people—tens of thousands of seniors have saved tens of millions of dollars on medicines because the Affordable Care Act closed the gap on prescription drugs. That means millions of seniors across this country have more money in their pockets for food, gas, and electric bills.

More than 3 million young people, because of ObamaCare, including 33,000

young Nevadans, have benefited from a provision in the law that allows children to stay on their parents' health plans until they are 26 years old. That means no person will have to worry about getting sick while looking for a job that offers insurance or while they go to college.

In my little town of Searchlight, NV, a boy made a decision. Was he going to join the military—he was from a patriotic family—or was he going to go to college? He made the decision that he was going to go to college. His family was not one of means. His mom worked part time in a post office, and his dad worked at a powerplant about 40 miles from Searchlight. They were so happy that this boy was going to go to college. He was the first person in their family to go to college, and he did extremely well.

He finished his first year, and he was in his second year when he started feeling some discomfort. He had testicular cancer. At the time ObamaCare passed, he was 23 years old and no longer could he be on his parents' insurance. So they had no insurance to cover this cancer their son had—their youngest boy. They begged and borrowed and literally—well, I shouldn't say "begged." They didn't do that. They had a very difficult time of it. He needed two surgeries.

Now I guess the Republicans in the House want to go back to that. Maybe the Republicans here—they love voting against ObamaCare provisions—want to go back to a time when that boy, Jeff, would no longer have insurance. That is what they want for these young men and women who are trying to go to college, to get a job—they want to go back to that time. He has 3 extra years now. That means a lot.

Under ObamaCare, hundreds of thousands of businesses that already offer their employees health insurance are getting tax credits for doing the right thing. That means small business owners can spend their capital on growing their firms instead of growing insurance premiums.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies can no longer set arbitrary lifetime caps on benefits, as they once did. What does that mean? It means there was a provision hidden in that policy they sold you that stated that when your benefits reach \$50,000, coverage stops. It didn't matter if you had been hurt in an automobile accident or you had cancer or some other dread disease; it used to stop. Not anymore. Because of the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans are no longer one car accident or a heart attack away from bankruptcy.

Today, children can no longer be denied coverage because they are born with a disease or a disability—a protection that will soon be extended to all Americans. Soon, being a woman will no longer be a preexisting condition. I said that right, Mr. President. No longer will being a woman be a preexisting condition. My daughter has a

preexisting condition. What is it? She is a woman. But no longer. In a few months, 129 million Americans with preexisting conditions, such as high blood pressure or epilepsy, can rest assured they will have access to affordable insurance and lifesaving care regardless of how much money they make or don't make. And soon 25 million more Americans who can't afford health insurance will have access to reasonably priced insurance and quality care. But if Republicans get their way, these benefits and more will disappear. There is going to be a vote in the House of Representatives to repeal everything I have talked about—not change it but repeal it.

President Obama led the charge here, and we were able to pass the Affordable Care Act—the most significant change in our health care delivery system since Medicare all those many, many years ago. It ensures access to quality affordable health care for every American. But Republicans would erase these gains and force millions of American families to once again rely on expensive emergency room care or go without care at all.

Fortunately, the Republicans' latest exercise in insanity, as described by Albert Einstein—that is, their latest repeal effort—is doomed to fail just as it did the previous 36 times.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### THE IRS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it seems like, with each passing hour, the facts get more and more inconvenient for senior folks over at the IRS.

Yesterday, it was reported that the agency may have gone after a ministry founded by Billy Graham. We also learned that the very same IRS office that admitted to harassing conservative groups also released nine pending applications for tax-exempt status to the liberal investigative group ProPublica.

How did we find out? ProPublica revealed it.

Basically all we have gotten from the IRS, on the other hand, is an attempt to scapegoat some folks out in Cincinnati and a laughable attempt to move past this whole issue with a ridiculous op-ed claiming "mistakes were made."

Well, most folks don't think that ignoring the Constitution is simply a "mistake." I like the fact that one group the IRS targeted, when asked by the agency to provide reading materials related to their mission, mailed them a copy of the Constitution.

Today, I would like to encourage every group that feels like it has been unjustly targeted to do the same. Maybe just underline the First Amendment before you put it in the envelope, because that is what this is all about.

But getting back to the latest news—the leak to ProPublica—let's be clear about what this means: the IRS is forbidden from providing that kind of information about groups that have not been approved. It is a bright line prohibition that even the lowliest staffers at the IRS surely should know about.

We intend to find out all the relevant details. Yesterday, I said the administration needs to comply fully with all congressional inquiries on the matter. This ProPublica leak will unquestionably be one of them. The administration needs to make witnesses available to testify on this and on any other incident of targeting the administration's ideological opponents, and to resist the temptation to stonewall or obfuscate what took place.

Today, other Senate Republicans are joining me in this call. More than 40 members have signed a letter demanding as much of the President.

If the President is truly concerned about this issue, as he claims, he will work openly and transparently with us to get to the bottom of what happened and people will be held accountable. These allegations are serious—that there was an effort to bring the power of the Federal Government to bear on those the administration disagreed with, in the middle of a heated national election. It actually could be criminal. And we are determined to get answers.

Again, let's not forget that we would not know any of this if congressional Republicans had not demanded better answers than the ones we were getting from the administration. When I and several of my colleagues wrote to the IRS last year seeking clarification on allegations that they were harassing conservative groups, the response we got was essentially: nothing to see here, move along.

When I pressed the issue in a speech last June, the left either ridiculed the suggestion or ignored it. When IRS officials were asked point blank in congressional hearings whether this was happening, they said point blank that it wasn't.

Of course it turns out it was.

By the way—you know who did not have trouble getting information out of the IRS? ProPublica, which was pushing an ideological agenda friendly to the administration. When they asked the IRS for information, they got it—in 12 days. Some of it was not even supposed to be released.

When I asked the IRS for information, when did I get it? Only when it was coming out anyway in an IG report.

So there are a lot—a lot—of unanswered questions that remain.

Which officials knew about this scandal?

When did they know about it?

What did they do about it when they found out?

Did they deliberately mislead Congress and the American people?

The number of officials involved continues to grow. And now, with this rev-

elation from ProPublica, it appears that the campaign against conservative groups was of a broader scope than originally admitted. So it is no surprise that the American people are demanding more than just some half-hearted apology made under duress. As an activist from one of the targeted groups in Kentucky said yesterday, "Apology not accepted."

"There are many questions that still need to be asked," he said. "There are many that remain unanswered."

My constituent was absolutely right.

I ask unanimous consent the letter signed by my colleagues be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE,

Washington, DC, May 14, 2013.

HON. BARACK OBAMA,

Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.,

Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to express our grave concerns and deep disappointment about the revelations in a report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) had specifically targeted certain organizations for extra scrutiny as part of their approval review of applications for tax-exempt 501(c)(4) status. This appears to be a wholly inappropriate action that threatens to silence political dissent and brings partisan politics into what used to be a nonpartisan, unbiased and fact-based review process. The public's confidence in the IRS relies on fair and apolitical application of the law. Actions such as these undermine taxpayers' ability to trust its government to fairly implement the law.

According to information given to Congress in a timeline provided by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), in early 2010 "specialists had been asked to be on the lookout for Tea Party applications, and the IRS Determinations Unit had begun searching its database for applications with 'Tea Party,' 'Patriots,' or '9/12' in the organization's name." The report goes on to state that "By June 2011, some IRS specialists were probing applications using the following criteria to identify tea-party cases, according to the Treasury inspector general findings: "'Tea Party,' 'Patriots' or '9/12 Project' is referenced in the case file; issues include government spending, government debt or taxes; education of the public by advocacy/lobbying to 'make America a better place to live'; statements in the case file criticize how the country is being run."

We are deeply disturbed that agents of the government were directed to give greater scrutiny to groups engaged in conduct questioning the actions of their government. This type of purely political scrutiny being conducted by an Executive Branch Agency is yet another completely inexcusable attempt to chill the speech of political opponents and those who would question their government, consistent with a broader pattern of intimidation by arms of your administration to silence political dissent.

These disclosures are even more unsettling as they contradict prior statements made by representatives of the Administration on this matter. In response to questions raised in 2012 on this issue by Republican Senators, Steven T. Miller, the Deputy Commissioner for Services and Enforcement at the IRS, specifically (and falsely) stated that there was an unbiased, technical screening process used to determine which applications for

501(c)(4) organizations merited further review. In two separate letters to Finance Committee Ranking Member Orrin Hatch, Mr. Miller failed to note that explicitly political screens were used in reviewing applications, despite the fact the practice was apparently well known within the IRS as early as 2010.

Given these strong and clear statements by the Administration in 2012 that no such targeted review or specified politically motivated criteria existed, these revelations raise serious questions about the entire application review process, and the controls in place at the IRS to stop this sort of political interference once and for all. According to TIGTA these actions took place more than two years ago, yet without this information becoming public, there is no evidence that your administration would have done anything to make sure these abuses were brought to light and dealt with in a transparent way.

The American people deserve to know what actions will be taken to ensure those who made these policy decisions at the IRS are being held fully accountable and more importantly what is being done to ensure that this kind of raw partisanship is fully eliminated from these critically important nonpartisan government functions. As such, we demand that your Administration comply with all requests related to Congressional inquiries without any delay, including making available all IRS employees involved in designing and implementing these prohibited political screenings, so that the public has a full accounting of these actions. It is imperative that the Administration be fully forthcoming to ensure that we begin to restore the confidence of our fellow citizens after this blatant violation of their trust. We look forward to working on this critical issue with the Administration's full cooperation.

Sincerely,

Orrin Hatch, John Barrasso, Pat Toomey, Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Bob Corker, David Vitter, Marco Rubio, Mark Kirk, John Thune, John Hoeven, James Inhofe, Deb Fischer, James Risch, Mike Johanns, Johnny Isakson, Richard Shelby, Tom Coburn, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, Rand Paul, Mike Crapo, Dan Coats, Kelly Ayotte, John McCain, Ted Cruz, Dean Heller, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Roger Wicker, Thad Cochran, Ron Johnson, Rob Portman, Michael B. Enzi, Jeff Flake, Susan Collins, Saxby Chambliss, Roy Blunt, Jeff Sessions, Lamar Alexander, Jerry Moran, Mike Lee, Lindsey Graham, Tim Scott, Lisa Murkowski.

#### NATIONAL POLICE WEEK 2013

MR. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week we mark National Police Week 2013 as a time to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the many men and women in Federal, State, and local law enforcement across America. It is an appropriate time for those of us who benefit from their efforts—and that is all of us—to express our gratitude.

The Nation's Capital welcomes thousands of police officers who are gathering to celebrate National Police Week. They will honor their fallen fellow officers and rededicate themselves to their duties of defending the property, dignity, and lives of those who would fall prey to criminals outside the law.